

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Lowell Porter



Captain Fred Fakkema
Government and Media Relations
(360) 753-5299 – office
(360) 753-5469 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

For Immediate Release

February 10, 2003

Contact: Lieutenant Julie Johnson, (360) 753-0304

2003 WSP Commercial Vehicle Division Summary Released

The fatality rate involving commercial vehicles in Washington State has continued to decrease for the fifth straight year!

The Commercial Vehicle Division of the Washington State Patrol reports in 2003 there were 43 fatalities involving commercial motor vehicles, a decrease of 14% from 2002 and a 34% decline since 2000. During this same time, inspections of commercial motor vehicles were up 18% from 2002 and up 46% from 2001, for a total of 137,162 commercial vehicles inspected in 2003. Over the last four years, commercial vehicle inspections have increased by 113%.

Of the 43 fatal collisions, 31 (or 72%) were caused by passenger vehicles. In response to this trend, the Commercial Vehicle Division has developed an innovative program called "Step Up and Ride," where troopers partner with the trucking industry to periodically ride along in commercial vehicles. The trooper identifies erratically driven vehicles to other troopers in marked units, who make contact with those drivers.

Due to the continued successes and increased work efforts by the division's personnel, grant money was secured to procure an unmarked vehicle for each of the eight districts. These vehicles will be used to target aggressive passenger cars interfering with commercial vehicle traffic as well as in commercial motor vehicle enforcement.

Commercial vehicle enforcement increased in 2003: speed enforcement is up 79%, following too closely up 102%, and seat belt enforcement is up 7%. There were 1,894 trucks contacted for left lane violations in 2003. Aggressive driving enforcement on commercial vehicles and passenger cars around commercial vehicles is up 474%.

School Bus Safety Inspections: In 2003, the Dedicated School Bus Inspector's Program received the Governor's Award for Public Benefit. To ensure the safety of school children, the WSP established two-person inspection teams to conduct annual inspections on the 9,037 school buses and 1,400 support vehicles throughout the state. Partnering with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the WSP trained 30 Washington State school bus driver trainers at the State Patrol academy. Drivers spent one day in the classroom and two days of hands-on training on the WSP academy drive course.

Freight Mobility: Commercial vehicle personnel were able to enhance our state's freight mobility, saving industry over \$10.4 million through the use of Commercial Vehicle Information Systems Network (CVISN) and Weigh in Motion (WIM) technologies. Trucks equipped with transponders are scanned at freeway speeds, and those with a good safety rating and appropriate credentials and weight are allowed to proceed without stopping every time the scales are open—nearly 6 million trucks were bypassed.

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